

MORE PAGES OF STORIES

A FAWCETT PUBLICATION



JUNE NO. 30

HOPALONG CASSIDY

Starring
WILLIAM
BOYD

10¢



IN
THIS
ISSUE:

DEATH AT THE STROKE OF TWELVE!



JOKER WILD

By Westbrook Wilson



HE WAS kind of a roly-poly fellow and not very tall. He came riding up to the office of the Bar B-Q ranch where our foreman, Ramrod Rodney, had stuck out a sign: **MEN WANTED**

The roly-poly fellow didn't exactly dismount; he sort of rolled off his horse. Our foreman stuck his head out the door and said, "Howdy!"

"Howdy?" replied the stranger.

"Are you a bronco buster?" asked the foreman.

"No, I'm not a bronco and my name ain't Buster," said the newcomer.

Ramrod gave him a hard look. He growled, "I'm looking for men, not jokers!"

"I don't blame you," responded the roly-poly. "Jokers are usually wild."

You can tell we were mighty hard up for hands or Ramrod would have sent his hombra packin' right then and there. But instead he just ignored that crack about jokers being wild and he asked roly-poly a question.

"Can you rope a steer?"

"Well, I can steer a rope," was the reply.

"Hub?"

"Why sure. You have to steer a rope to rope a steer. I can do that."

Ramrod growled, "Come on inside and sign on." They both disappeared into the office.

Plenty of odd characters were hired on during that time of the manpower shortage at the old spread, but the strangest one of all was Roly. Seemingly he had a real name but everybody at first called him Roly Poly and

finally just Roly for short. He turned out to be a right good cowhand, too, considering he wasn't long and lanky like most of the good ones are supposed to be.

He really could steer a rope—that is to say, rope a steer—and he was handy with either a branding iron or a shooting iron, it didn't matter which.

Only trouble with him was that he was all the time trying to be a comedian. Actually, there's nothing wrong with a joke now and then. Everybody likes to laugh. But nobody can be funny all the time, which was what Roly tried, and furthermore, his humor ran mostly to puns, which can become sort of wearing if you hear 'em night and day.

Like one day, when most of the boys were taking their ease in the bunkhouse, half of 'em asleep, he came thundering up and bellowed, "Hey, men! There's some rustling goin' on!"

Well, sir, everybody hopped out, buckling on their gun belts and picking up rifles and so on and somebody says, "Where? Where is the rustling goin' on?"

Roly replied, "I heard some leaves rustling in the trees."

The boys nearly killed him for that, spoiling their rest and all for such a punk joke. Reckon they would have killed him if Ramrod hadn't stopped them just as Roly was going down for the third time.

Roly's lips were kind of swollen where somebody had socked him, but he managed to grin at Ramrod and say, "Thank you, boss. You saved my wife—I mean, life."

(Continued on inside back cover)



HOPALONG CASSIDY

Executive Editor

Editor

WILL LIEBERMAN

Y. A. PROSSER

The following outstanding magazines are weekly identified in their covers by the words A. FAWCETT PUBLICATION.

CAPT. MARVEL ADVENTURES • THE MARVEL FAMILY • LASH LAKE WESTERN • FAWCETT'S FUNNY ANIMALS
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Every effort is made to insure that these cover magazines contain the highest quality of wholesome entertainment *W. A. Fawcett, Jr., President*

HOPALONG CASSIDY



STARRING
WILLIAM BOYD

in the CASE of the BROKEN NECK

SHERIFF
DAN RIVER
COUNTY
JAIL

LOOK AT THAT CROWD IN FRONT OF THE GOLD ASSAY SHOP! OH, THEY'RE WATCHING THOSE MEN TAKING THAT WAGON OFF THE WAGON! HAH, IT CERTAINLY MUST BE HEAVY! THOSE TWO BELLIES CAN HARDLY BUOY IT!

GOLD ASSAY SHOP

I GUESS IT'S TOO MUCH FOR JUST TWO MEN! I'LL ASK SOME OF THE OTHERS TO PITCH IN WITH ME AND GIVE THEM A HAND!

RED IRON SHOP

BUT BEFORE HOPALONG CAN CARRY OUT HIS IDEA...

STEP ASIDE, YER NEARLINGS! I'LL SHOW YER WHAT A REAL HOMBRE CAN DO!

IT'S HERE THE BLACKSMITH! HE'S GOING TO TRY TO DO IT ALL BY HIMSELF!

HOPALONG CASSIDY is based on the character originated by CLARENCE E. MUIRFORD

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"NEEPPS, HECK PICKED IT RIGHT UP!"

"JUMPING LEBLANCHET, WHAT STRENGTH!"

"THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT! HECK IS THE MOST POWERFUL MAN I'VE EVER SEEN!"



"WATCH THIS, FOLKS! AND THOSE TWO POOR DEACONS PER MEN GODD'YIT! EVEN LIFT IT OFF THE MASON!"

"GUP! HE'S SHOWING US UP!"



"I'VE NOT GONNA TO LET HIM BRAGME US LIKE THAT! I'VE GONNA TO GET EVEN WITH HIM! I'VE MASH HIM BACK WE WERE KIDS AND HE'S AS TOUGH AS A TWIN-SKINNED GORNER IN A CACTUS PATCH!"



"YAH, YOU'RE SURE POWERFUL, HECK! YOU'RE THE STRONGEST HONESTER IN THE WHOLE WEST! YEE, DEETHE!"

"HEY! HA, HA! STOP TICKLING ME! HUH, HA!"

"WHAT THE---"



"OUT IT OUT! HA, HA! STOP IT, HONESTER! I CAN'T HOLD ONTO THIS MASH! HA, HA! STOP--- COME!"



"G.R.A-SH!"

"OH, HE DROPPED THE MASH ON HIS FOOT!"

"(GUP!) I'D BETTER GET OUT OF HIS FRONT!"



"BUT THE ENRAGED BLACKSMITH THREW HIM IN A FLAHE!"

"I'LL KILL YOU AND THIS!"

"(GUP!)"



"STOP! YOU'RE CACKING ME!"

"HERE IS OUT OF HIS MIND WITH FURY! I'D BETTER STOP HIM BEFORE HE KILL SCORDAN!"



LET GO OF HIM, HIRK! LET GO!

HELP!
(GASP!)



PLEASE HELP ME... SOMEBODY!

HIRK'S SO WILD WITH ANGER HE WON'T STOP AND HE'S SO POWERFUL I CAN'T PULL HIM AWAY! I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING IN A HURRY!



SHORT OF BRASS MY GUN, THIS RABBIT PUNCH IS THE ONLY THING I CAN THINK OF THAT MIGHT DO THE TRICK!

WHAM!

HOPALONG'S TREMENDOUS SLASHING BLOW AGAINST THE BACK OF HIRK'S NECK, HAD ITS DESIRED EFFECT! EVEN THOUGH IT DIDN'T KNOCK HIM OUT AS IT WOULD HAVE DONE TO ALMOST ANYONE ELSE, IT DOES FORCE THE ENRAGED BLACKSMITH TO LET GO OF GORDAN, AND AS HE WHIRLS AROUND BELLOWING WITH RAGE...

AAAAH... WHO DO THAT? I'LL TEAR HIM LIMBS FROM LIMBS!

NO YOU WON'T HIRK! I DO IT AND YOU'RE NOT GOING TO DO A THING ABOUT IT!



FLOP!



HOW IS GORDAN?

I RECKON HE'S ALL RIGHT, POPPY. JUST BADDY SHAKEN UP!



WITH YOUR STRENGTH YOU SHOULDN'T LET YOUR TONGUE GET THE BETTER OF YOU LIKE THAT, HIRK! YOU MIGHT HAVE HURT GORDAN! REAL BAD AND YOU'D HAVE BEEN IN SERIOUS TROUBLE!

...I RECKON YOU'RE RIGHT, CASSIDY! I'M SORRY.



I PLUMB SAW RED WHEN HE TALKED ME AND MADE ME DROP THE VAULT ON ME POPPY! I DON'T LIKE ANYONE TO MAKE A FOOL OF ME!

THAT'S NO EXCUSE FOR VIOLENCE!



SUPPOSE WE FORGET THE WHOLE THING! BUT BEFORE YOU GO, HOW ABOUT PICKING UP THAT BRASS KNUCKLE AND BRINGING IT INSIDE THE ARMY SHOP! OTHERWISE IT'LL BE A STRUGGLE FOR US TO DO IT!

SURE, HOPALONG!





HOPALONG CASSIDY





THIS ISN'T THE SAFEST WAY TO GET DOWN, BUT A MAN'S LIFE MAY BE DEPENDING ON IT!



SHORTLY AFTER ...

GOOD BOY, TOPPER! YOU'VE GOT THE SURE-FOOTEDNESS OF A MOUNTAIN GOAT COMBINED WITH THE SPEED OF MERCURY!



NOW I JUST HOPE THAT POOR FELLOW IS ALIVE!



NO, TOPPER, WE'RE TOO LATE! HE'S DEAD AND FROM THE LOOKS OF HIM, HE'S BEEN DEAD A FEW DAYS!



AWWW, MY BECK IS BROKEN; I RECKON HE BROKE IT IN THE FALL!



WAIT! WHAT'S THIS? FINGER BRUISES ON HIS NECK! THIS MAN WAS MURDERED! SOMEONE STRANGLERED HIM AND BROKE HIS NECK!



IT TOOK STRENGTH TO DO THAT, BUT THERE ARE PLENTY OF MEN STRONG ENOUGH, SO THAT'S NO USE!

HOPALONG CASSIDY

THE BEST THING TO DO IS TAKE HIS BODY BACK TO TOWN AND SEE IF I CAN DIG UP ANY INFORMATION ABOUT HIM. I MIGHT GET A CLUE OR A LEAD I COULD FOLLOW UP ON!



THE FOLLOWING DAY AT THE LOCAL TOWN'S NEWS...

NOW THAT I'VE GOT SOME SPARE TIME, I'LL BE UP TODAY'S PAPER & COULDN'T LOOK AT THIS HEADLINE! "SHERIFF CASSIDY FINDS MURDERED MAN IN HILLS. VICTIM'S NECK BROKEN BY POWERFUL KILLER!"



HOPALONG FOUND THE CUTTER, I KILLED AND HE KNOWS IT WAS A POWERFUL HOMBRE WHO DID IT!



[GULP!] CASSIDY IS SMART! HE KNOWS HE'S THE STRONGEST HOMBRE IN THESE PARTS AND THE ONLY MAN WHO HAS THE STRENGTH IN MY HANDS TO BREAK A WARRIOR'S NECK LIKE THAT!



IT BETTER VANISH OUT OF TOWN! NO, THAT WOULDN'T WORK! I KNOW HOPALONG! I HAVEN'T GET AWAY FROM HIM! THE ONLY WAY I'LL BE SAFE IS TO KILL HIM!



AND I KNOW HOW TO DO THAT! I'LL TALK HIM. ALL I HAVE TO DO IS SEND HIM THIS NOTE AND---



THE FOLLOWING MORNING, IN HOPALONG'S OFFICE ...

[THUD, THUD] I GUESS I BELL ASLEEP IN THE CHAIR? HUH? WHAT'S THAT SAID THE DOOR?

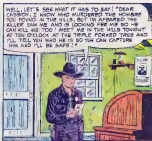


IT'S A NOTE! I WONDER WHO LEFT IT THERE?





NOBODY'S AROUND; SOMEONE MUST HAVE SLIPPED IT UNDER THE DOOR WHILE I WAS ASLEEP!



WELL, LET'S SEE WHAT IT HAS TO SAY! "DEAR CASSIDY, I KNOW WHO MURDERED THE HOBBERS YOU RODED IN THE HILLS, BUT I'VE APPARED THE ROLLER SAW ME AND IS LOOKING FOR ME SO HE CAN KILL ME TOO! MEET ME IN THE HILLS TONIGHT AT TEN O'CLOCK AT THE TRIPLE FORKED TREE AND I'LL TELL YOU WHO HE IS SO YOU CAN CAPTURE HIM AND I'LL BE SAFE!"



WELL, THIS IS LOCK! I WOULDN'T BEEN ABLE TO GET A SINGLE LEAD ON THAT MURDER, AND NOW HERE'S SOMEONE WAITING TO FILL IN ALL THE ANSWERS!



BUT WAIT---THERE'S SOMETHING RECLINE ABOUT THAT NOTE! HOW DID IT GET HERE?



IT WASN'T SENT THROUGH THE MAIL; THAT MEANS THE MAN WHO WROTE IT MUST HAVE SLIPPED IT UNDER MY DOOR! BUT IF HE'S SO BRAVE ON HIS LIFE AND HAS GONE INTO HIDE, WOULD HE HAVE TAKEN A CHANCE ON COMING INTO TOWN AND WALKING UP TO THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE?



ON THE OTHER HAND, HE MIGHT HAVE GOTTEN SOMEONE ELSE TO BRING THE NOTE HERE WHILE HE SET OUT FOR THE HILLS TO GO INTO HIDING!



I WISH IT WERE TONIGHT! I'D BEGINS TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS!





IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, TOPPER !
ACCIDENTS HAPPEN ! AND DON'T
WORRY. SOMEHOW OR OTHER WE'LL
CATCH UP WITH THAT KILLER YET !



BUT RIGHT NOW WE HAVE TO
GO TO THE BLACKSMITH'S
SHOP AND GET YOU A NEW
SHOE ! BY THE TIME WE GET
THERE IT WILL BE DAWN !
SO HERE SHOULD BE UP !



A FEW HOURS LATER ...

HA. I SURE SLEPT MY SLEEP !
NOW THAT I KILLED HOPALONG,
I'VE GOT NOTHING ON MY MIND
EXCEPT MY HAIR ! HAHA !



I HEAR SOMEONE RING UP !
I RECKON IT'S AN EARLY
CUSTOMER !



GAUF ! IT---IT'S
HOPALONG ! BUT
---I KILLED
HIM !



MY SHOTS MUST HAVE MISSED
HIM AND HE PLAYED POSSEUM TO
FOOL ME INTO THINKING HE
WAS DEAD !



NOW HE KNOWS FOR SURE
IT'S ME AND HE'S COMING
TO GET ME !



BUT HE WON'T ! I'LL STRANGLE
HIM WITH MY OWN BARE HANDS
AND THIS TIME I'LL MAKE SURE
I KILL HIM !



HOPALONG CASSIDY



THESE ARE THE MANES THAT BEAT THE OTHER VAMPIRE'S BUCK, HOPALONG, AND NOW THEY'RE GOING TO BREAK YOURS, TOO! BUT THIS TIME I'LL MAKE SURE SOMEBODY WILL FIND YOUR BODY! AND NO ONE ELSE WILL BE SMART ENOUGH TO LINK ME WITH ANY OF THIS!



(GASP! GASP!) I STUMBLERED ONTO THE REAL MURDERER BY ACCIDENT, BUT IT'S NOT GOING TO DO ME ANY GOOD! (GASP!) HE'S CHOKING THE LIFE OUT OF ME, I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING FAST!



(GASP!) I CAN'T BREATHE, HIS GRIP! HIS TOO STRONG! WHAT—I JUST REMEMBERED SOMETHING! HE'S VERY TICKLISH!



HOPALONG CASSIDY





I GOT HIS EYE WITH THAT LAST PUNCH! MAYBE IF I CAN KEEP BANGING AWAY AT HIS EYES, I CAN SHUT THEM! GAD! HIS VISION IS IMPAIRED! I'LL HAVE THE UPPER HAND!



MOVING SWIFTLY AND LIMBER FROM SIDE TO SIDE, BACK AND FORTH, ANOTHER SWIFT WILD LEASE OF THE ENRAGED SLACKER'S, THE BRILLIANTLY-BORN HOPALONG COLUMBERS WITH PITCH-LIKE LEFT JABS THAT SOON HAD BOTH OF HENK'S EYES IN A BAD WAY!



I'LL KILL YER FOR THIS, HOPALONG!

HE CAN HARDLY SEE ANY MORE! NOW I CAN MOVE IN WITH MY HEAVY ARTELLERY!

HOPALONG STARTS ANOTHER LEFT JAB BUT STOPS IT FOR A FRACTION OF A SECOND IN MID-AIR AND SENDS A LEFT HOOK CRASHING TO THE SIDE OF HENK'S FACE!



WHAM



HOPALONG STARTS ANOTHER LEFT HOOK!



HENK SEES THE LEFT HOOK COMING AND PUTS HIS HANDS UP TO BLOCK IT!



BUT HOPALONG WAS ONLY FEINTING AND AS HENK PUTS UP HIS HANDS TO PROTECT HIS CHEST, HOPALONG LASHES OUT WITH A LIGHTNING-FAST RIGHT-HAND PUNCH TO HENK'S UNPROTECTED STOMACH!

POW!

oof!

HOPALONG CASSIDY

AS HEIK STRUCKS TO DOUBLE UP WITH AXES, HIS ARMS DROPPING TO HIS SIDES, HOPALONG SHOOTS A SHORT, POWERFUL LEFT TO HIS HEAD!



THE POWERFUL BLOW TURNS HEIK'S HEAD HALFWAY AROUND—RIGHT IN THE LINE OF AN EXPLOSIVE RIGHT CROSS TO THE JAW!



AS THOUGH STRUCK BY AN AXE, THE PULVERIZED GIANT FALLS WITH A GREAT CRASH RIGHT ON HIS FACE!



BEFORE I DO ANYTHING ELSE I'M PUTTING THESE HANDCUFFS ON HIM! THEN I'LL TAKE HIM TO JAIL! WHEN HE COMES TO, MAYBE I CAN FIND OUT WHY HE ASSAULTED THE OTHER FELLOW!



ONCE IN JAIL, HEIK CONFESSES ALL!

DO YOU KILLED FLOYD BUCKLE? YOU REALLY BELIEVED HE HAD DISCOVERED IRON THAT WOULD NEVER WEAR OUT? YOU SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THAT THE ONLY THING THAT LASTS FOREVER IS THE LAW OF JUSTICE WHICH SEES TO IT THAT EVERYONE WHO COMES TO A CRIME PAYS FOR IT—JUST LIKE YOU WILL! YOU'LL HAVE TO PAY THE SUPREME PENALTY FOR YOUR MURDER!



HOPALONG CASSIDY

starring William Boyd

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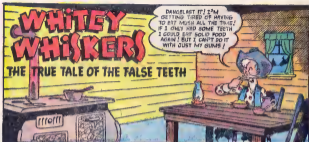
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HILL BILLY

IS PUZZLED!











HOPALONG CASSIDY

Starring
WILLIAM BOYD

DEATH AT THE STROKE OF 12



Hopalong Cassidy battles an opponent that can never be stopped—time! Second by second Twin River's gallant sheriff is swept closer and closer to the fateful hour—where death stands waiting for him with outstretched arms!



AT THE TWIN RIVER BANK...

A CERTAIN ACCOUNTANT IS COMING TO THE BANK TOMORROW, REARDE, TO AUDIT THE BOOKS!

(GASP!) THE ACCOUNTANT WILL FIND OUT THAT I'VE STOLEN TWENTY THOUSAND DOLLARS OF THE BANK'S MONEY!



ER, I'D BETTER COME BACK THIS EVENING AND GET EVERYTHING READY FOR HIM, MR. DUNSTON!

THAT'S A GOOD IDEA, REARDE!



WART BURNING...
HELLO, STANTON! I'VE COME BACK TO DO A LITTLE MORE, IT WON'T TAKE LONG!

TAKE YOUR TIME, WE'RE READY!



THE ONLY WORK I'VE GOT TO DO IS MAKE SURE THAT ACCOUNTANT AND MR. DIVISION NEVER FIND OUT I'VE EMBEZZLED ALL THAT MONEY!



AND I'VE FIGURED OUT JUST HOW TO DO IT! NOW THE FIRST THING TO DO IS OPEN THAT SAFE!



THESE ARE THE LEADERS WHICH WILL GIVE ME AWAY! WELL, THEY WON'T BE IN EXISTENCE TOMORROW WHEN THE ACCOUNTANT SHOWS UP TO EXAMINE THEM!



I MAY AS WELL DO A GOOD "JOB" WHILE I'M AT IT! THERE'S NO SENSE LEAVING ANY MONEY AROUND SO I'M GOING TO BLOW THIS PLACE UP!



THIS THICK BRIEF CASE WILL MUFFLE THE TICKING OF THE TIME BOMB I'LL PUT INSIDE IT! THEN IF STANTON WALKS IN HERE AFTER I LEAVE, HE WON'T HEAR A THING!



I'LL JUST PUT THIS TIME BOMB IN THE SAFE HERE LIKE THIS! IT'S SET TO GO OFF AT ELEVEN O'CLOCK --- THAT'S AN HOUR FROM NOW --- AND THEN I'LL HAVE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT! ALL OF THIS WILL BE DESTROYED --- THE SAFE, THE LEADERS, THE CASH BOXES AND PART OF THE OFFICE!



THAT'LL PUT ME IN THE CLEAR! THERE WON'T BE ANY BOOKS FOR THE ACCOUNTANT TO GO OVER AND MR. DIVISION WILL OWE THAT ALL THE MONEY THAT'S MISSING WAS DESTROYED IN THE EXPLOSION!



THAT'LL BE NO REASON FOR ANYONE TO SUSPECT THAT I DID IT! ALL THE EVIDENCE THAT I TOOK MY MONEY WILL BE GONE! IT WILL REMAIN ONE OF THOSE UNSOLVED MYSTERIES!



THROUGH SO FAST, NO BODIES?

YES, STANTON, THAT WASN'T MUCH TO DO! GOOD NIGHT!



HOW TO CARRY OUT THE REST OF MY PLAN! I'M GOING TO THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE AND CHASE THE TAG WITH HOPALONG CASSIDY UNTIL ELEVEN O'CLOCK SO I'LL BE THERE WHEN THE BOMB GOES OFF! THAT'LL SURELY TAKE ALL SUSPICION OFF ME... BEING WITH THE SHERIFF AT THE VERY MOMENT THE BOMB EXPLODES!



HONEY, CASSIDY! THAT ISN'T A MAN I'D RATHER SPEND AN HOUR OR TWO TALKING WITH THAN TEN! DO YOU MIND IF I PULL UP A CHAIR AND WAIT FOR AWHILE?

ER, OF COURSE NOT, REVEREND!

3 **READY BUSINESS** HOPALONG IN CONVERSATION, THERE ARE OTHER MEN INTERESTED IN THE BANKING BUSINESS AT THE SAME TIME!



THE STREET'S QUITE DESERTED RIGHT NOW! THIS IS A GOOD TIME FOR US TO ROB THE BANK!

YEAH! THE GUARD JUST WENT INSIDE! THAT'LL MAKE IT EVEN EASIER FOR US!



AS SOON AS HE OPENS THE DOOR, LET HIM HAVE IT!

KNOCK! KNOCK!



YES - WAIT... **UGH!**

QUICK! DRAG HIM INSIDE!

HOPALONG CASSIDY

YEH DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT HIM! HE'S OUT COLD!

GOOD! LET'S GET TO THE SAFE PRONTO!

FEW MOMENTS LATER...

WHAT THE— THAT'S NO MONEY HYER! WHAT KIND OF BANK IS THIS?

THE ONLY THING HYER IS THIS BRASS CASE! MAYBE IT HAS SOMETHING OF VALUE IN IT! LET'S TAKE IT!

MOMENTS LATER, THE GUARD COMES TO, AND AWAKES TO HOPALONG'S OFFICE!

ON, YOUR HONOR, TOO, NO REPLY? WELL, THE CONCERN IS YEH, TOO! I'VE GOT BAD NEWS— SOME BANDITS ANCHORED ME OUT AND ROBBED THE SAFE!

WHAT THE—

WHEN DID THIS HAPPEN?

A SHORT WHILE AGO, I DON'T THINK IT WAS MORE THAN FIFTEEN MINUTES! IT MIGHT BE EVEN LESS! AS SOON AS I CAME TO, I LOOKED AROUND. THE SAFE WAS OPEN AND CLEARED OUT! THEM I RAN RIGHT OVER HYER!

THEY COULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN TOO FAR YET! MAYBE I CAN STILL CATCH THEM!

THE SAFE WAS CLEARED OUT! THAT'S WORSE THAN THE BANDITS TOOK THE BANK CASE WITH THE TIME BOMB IN IT!

LET'S GO, TAPPER! THOSE BANDITS MOST LIKELY ARE HEADING FOR THE BORDER!

I NEVER FIGURED ON ANYTHING LIKE THIS! THE BOOKS AND THE LEDGERS ARE STILL INTACT! THE AUDITOR WILL FIND OUT ABOUT MY SWINDLING THE MONEY!

WAIT... MAYBE IT WILL STILL WORK OUT ALL RIGHT FOR ME! IT'S A QUARTER TO ELEVEN! THE TIME BOMB WILL GO OFF IN FIFTEEN MINUTES AND ALL THOSE HONORABLE MRS. OWINGTON AND THE ACCOUNTANT WILL OFFER THEY STOLE THE MONEY THAT WAS DESTROYED FROM THE BANK AND THAT IT WAS DESTROYED IN THE EXPLOSION WHILE THEY WERE CARRYING IT!

BUT CASSIDY IS THE GREATEST SHERIFF IN THE WORLD! HE'S LIKELY TO CATCH THOSE SWINDLERS BEFORE THE BOMB GOES OFF AND FIND OUT THEY DIDN'T STEAL ANY MONEY!



OF COURSE HE'S LIABLE TO BE BLOWN UP WITH THEM! BUT I CAN'T WORRY ABOUT THAT! THE BEST THING FOR ME TO DO IS GET BACK TO THE BANK AND LEAVE ANOTHER TIME BOMB THERE!



THEN NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, THE BOMB WILL BE DESTROYED!



ANYWAY! ... I WAS RIGHT, TOPPER! THE OUTLAWS WERE HEADING FOR THE BORDER! THERE THEY ARE! UP AHEAD! LET'S GET THEM, BOY!



BUT AS HOPALONG STARTS TO CUT DOWN THE DISTANCE BETWEEN THEM, THE HORDES OF TIME REACH THE ELEVENTH HOUR!

BOOM!

WHAT THE—



BY THE TIME THE SMOKE CLEARS QUINCY AND HOPALONG ARE BOTH DEAD! LUCKY QUINCY HUNG LEFT OF THE TWO GANGS ON THE HORDES!

IT'S A TERRIBLE SIGHT! THEY MUST HAVE BEEN CARRYING SOME KIND OF EXPLOSIVE AND IT WENT OFF!



THIS WAS A BREEF ONE! IT'S PROBABLY WHAT THEY PUT THE MONEY IN THAT THEY STOLE FROM THE BANK! I WISHON NOBODY WILL EVER SEE THAT MONEY AGAIN! IT MUST HAVE BEEN BLOWN TO BITS JUST LIKE THE MEN WERE!



HMM, THAT'S STRANGE! THERE'S NOT A TORN PIECE OF THE MONEY AROUND! IF THE MONEY WAS BLOWN UP, THERE SHOULD BE PLENTY OF FRAGMENTS SCATTERED ABOUT!



THERE'S SOMETHING POWERFUL, PECULIAR ABOUT THIS! TWO BANDITS BREAK INTO A BANK, ARE BLOWN UP WHILE THEY ARE RIDING AWAY, BUT THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT THEY TOOK ANY MONEY!



I'M GOING BACK TO THE BANK AND TAKE A LOOK AROUND! MARRS I CAN FIND SOME OF THE ANSWERS TO THIS MYSTERY THERE!



WORTHY AFTER... IT'S A GOOD THING I HAVE THE KEY TO THE BACK DOOR OF THIS BANK! NO ONE WILL EVER KNOW I CAME BACK!



I'VE GOT ANOTHER COVEN IN THIS BEEP CASE AND IT WILL GO OFF AT THE STRIKE OF MIDNIGHT, LESS THAN TWENTY MINUTES FROM NOW!



OH, IT'S YOU, REARER? I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE HERE!
 (GASP!) THE HOPALONG! HE WASN'T BLOWN AWAY!



OH, I JUST CAME TO SEE HOW MUCH THE FORWARD GOT AWAY WITH! NOW I HAVE TO GO AND TELL MILDENHOLM THE SAD NEWS! THEY CLEANED OUT ALL THE CASH THAT WAS IN THE SALES!

THEY DO? THAT'S DOO! THEY DON'T HAVE A SINGLE DOLLAR ON THEM!



(GASP!) CASSIDY KNOWS THEY DIDN'T TAKE ANY MONEY! I'LL BE CAUGHT UNLESS I GET RID OF HIM!



SAY, WHAT'S THAT LYING ON THE FLOOR UNDER THE DESK?

SOMETHING UNDER THE DESK? I'LL TAKE A LOOK! IT MAY BE A CLUE!



THE ONLY THING ON THE FLOOR IS GOING TO BE YOU!



AND THAT'S WHEN YOU'LL STILL BE WHEN THE BOMB GOES OFF IN TEN MINUTES! YOU COULDN'T RESIST CONQUERORS FROM THAT CREEK IN TEN MINUTES!



GOODBYE, CASSIDY! IN TEN MINUTES YOUR WOH'T BE ANY MORE YEA, LIDDERS, SAFE OF OFFICE, AND I'LL BE IN THE CLEAR!

HE UNCONSCIOUS HOPALONG LIES ON THE FLOOR WHILE THE MINUTES DURN THEIR PERSISTENT WAY... GETTING CLOSER AND CLOSER TO THE F... FALL HOUR OF MIDNIGHT WHEN THE TIME BOMB WILL GO OFF...



IT LOOKS AS IF IT'S ALL OVER! THERE ARE FEWER THAN SIXTY SECONDS LEFT IN HOPALONG'S LIFE...

...WHEN HOPALONG COMES TO! HIS TREMENDOUS STRENGTH AND VITALITY HAVE ENABLED HIM TO SHAK OFF THE EFFECTS OF THE COWARDLY AND BRUTAL GRACE ON THE HEAD IN INCREDIBLY FAST TIME, BUT HE DOESN'T WORRY ABOUT THE BOMB WHICH WILL GO OFF IN LITTLE LESS THAN HALF A MINUTE!



MY HEAD... REAR! HE'S THE ONE WHO DID IT! HE WHACKED ME OUT!

GET OUT, HOPALONG! THERE ARE ONLY THIRTY SECONDS LEFT!

BUT WHY? HE'S NO DOUBT INVOLVED IN ALL THIS, BUT WHAT'S THE CONNECTION?



ONLY TWENTY SECONDS, HOPALONG... ONLY TWENTY SECONDS OF LIFE, IF YOU STAY HERE!

THOSE ARE THE BANK LEDGERS! MAYBE READE HAS BEEN EMBEZZLING MONEY!



ONLY FIFTEEN SECONDS LEFT!

I'LL TAKE A LOOK!



YOU WAREN'T THAT TO LOOK IN THOSE LEDGERS, HOPALONG, OR YOU'LL SOON BE AN ENTRY IN THE BOOK OF DEATH!

I GUESS I WOULDN'T KNOW EVEN IF I DID LOOK!



HURRY HOPALONG! THERE ARE ONLY TEN SECONDS!

WHY! THAT BEEP CREW! WHY SHOULD THE GANGBOS HAVE TAKEN ONE AND NOT THE OTHER?



I'M GOING TO OPEN IT AND SEE WHAT'S IN IT!



WHAT THE...A TIME BOMB! READE MUST HAVE LEFT IT! I WONDER WHAT TIME IT'S SET TO GO OFF!



THERE'S NO TELLING WHEN IT WILL EXPLODE!

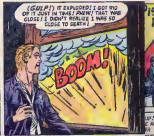


IT'S SET TO GO OFF IN TWO SECONDS, HOPALONG! TWO SECONDS!

IT'S JUST ONE SECOND YOU'LL FIND OUT... AT THE COST OF YOUR LIFE!



I'M NOT GOING TO HOLD ON TO THIS ANY LONGER! I'LL TOSSE IT OUT THE BACK DOOR INTO THAT WACANT LOT!



(GASP!) IT EXPLODED! I GOT RID OF IT JUST IN TIME! PHEW! THAT WAS CLOSE! I DON'T REMEMBER I WAS SO CLOSE TO DEATH!

BOOM!



I'M GOING TO HAVE A TALK WITH REARDE AND GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS!



ANYWAY...
 NOW I CAN GO TO SLEEP WITH A FREE MIND? WITH ALL THE EVIDENCE COME THAT I SNEZZLED THE MONEY AND WITH CASSIDY KILLED IN THE EXPLOSION, TOO, I'M AS SAFE AS A BIRD IN A HOLE!



PUT AT THAT MOMENT...
 HOPALONG! YES, REARDE, I'M STILL ALIVE—NO THANKS TO YOU!



NOW GET OUT OF BED AND START TALKING! AND DON'T LIE OR TRY ANY TRICKS OR YOU'LL NEVER LIVE TO GET TO THE COUNTRYSIDE!

D-D-DON'T SHOOT, HOPALONG! I'LL TELL YOU EVERYTHING! I KNOW WHEN I'M LIKED!



AFTER REARDE EXPLAINS...
 THAT MAKES EVERYTHING CLEAR! I'LL, REARDE, YOU'VE SPENT A LOT OF TIME BEHIND A BANK TELLER'S BARS, BUT YOU'LL BE BEHIND PRISON BARS FOR A LONGER TIME! LET'S GO!

—AND I DO IT ALL TO COVER UP THE FACT THAT I SNEZZLED THE BANK'S MONEY!

PISTOL PACKING PATTIE

A BASS-REMARK



THEY'RE BLASSER SHOWING OFF AGAIN! I WONDER WHAT HIRE BOSSING ABOUT THIS TIME? I'LL GO OVER AND FIND OUT!



— AND THE MANAGER OF THE OPEY HOUSE SAID HE NEVER HEARD A VOICE AS GOOD AS MINE!
IS THAT SO?



YOU'VE GIVE 'EM ALL OF A BASSING ABOUT IN SUE!
GOSH! WHAT DO YOU BING BEEB, BASSER?



I KNOW WHAT BLASSER SINGS BEST!
WHAT, PISTOL PACKING PATTIE?



HE'S OWN PRAYSER!
GULP!
HE'AR!

SADDLE-HEAD
A STRAIGHT SHOOTER!



GOSH SADDLEHEAD, WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN? YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO MEET ME HERE AT NINE O'CLOCK! IT'S PAST ELEVEN NOW!
BE I KNOW!



WELL, WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN?
I WAS BATHING BREAKFAST!



HEH? WHY, HOW LONG DID IT TAKE YOU TO BAT BREAKFAST THIS MORNING?
THREE HOURS!



WHAT? IT TOOK YOU THREE HOURS TO BAT BREAKFAST?
THAT'S RIGHT...



— I WAS STRAIGHTENING THE WINKLES OUT OF THE PRONGS!
GULP!



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Joker Wild

(Continued from inside front cover.)

"Don't mention it, it's only temporary," replied the foreman. "As soon as I can get a hand to replace you, I'll let the boys kill you all they want to. In fact, I'll very likely join in."

But threats and beatings couldn't suppress Roly. One Monday, after a heavy spring rain, he flagged down the railroad train and hollered, "There's a washout on the line ahead!"

The engineer, fireman and conductor all climbed out of the train and ran along the tracks with Roly till they came to the O'Grady homestead. Then Roly pointed to the clothes-line on which Mrs. O'Grady had hung clothing and sheets and such to dry and he said, "See? There's a wash out on the line!"

Well, sir, that engineer was all in favor of running his locomotive right over Roly's neck and I hear it took both the fireman and conductor to hold him back.

Another time, when he was in town, he rushed into the sheriff's office and hollered, "Hey, Sheriff, come quick. There's a rubber leaf in the bank."

You've probably guessed by now that when they got to the bank, everything was quiet, but Roly opened a desk drawer and pulled out something and said, "See? There's a rubber leaf in the bank."

Roly was riding the ridge alone when he spotted a dozen strange men, wearing masks, hauling a bunch of the Bar B-Q beef towards the foothills. He rode lickerby-split back to the ranch and gave the alarm. Only nobody got alarmed. Everybody yawned, even the foremen.

"Go play your jokes on the railroad," one fellow said.

"Or kid the sheriff if you want to," suggested another. "We ain't biting."

Ramrod even tried to turn the "joke" on Roly. He said, "If they're really wrastlers, ask them to come here and wrastle me."

You've got to hand it to Roly. He wasn't any coward. He said to the boys, "All right, if you won't help me, I'll catch those rustlers by myself. It's one against twelve, but I may find that dozen dozen!"

He rode off and chased after those sidewinders who were stealing our cattle. They had a good head start, so it was quite some time before he caught up with them. He winged two before they put slugs in him and knocked him off his cayuse. Then they dragged him to a cave, which was their hide-out. He had a slug through his shoulder, and one through his elbow, but lucky for him, nobody had shot out his tongue.

The leader of the rustlers said to him, "We've got you in our power. But if you give us some secret information about the Bar B-Q, we will spare you."

Roly thumped on his chest and said, "Please spare my heart, spare my liver, spare ribs!"

"Hey, are you making fun of us?" exclaimed the outlaw.

"I'm a joker," said Roly, "and jokers are always wild!"

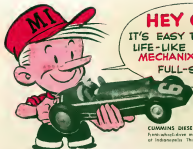
Somehow, he got a chance to run out of that cave. And when the outlaws came pounding after him, he threw a lasso loop around all of them. He disarmed them and brought them in to the sheriff's office. That much of this story is positive fact.

NOW, what he claimed afterward was that he told a joke so funny that all the outlaws shook with laughter. Tears came into their eyes. They were shaking so that they couldn't aim their guns and the tears kept them from seeing straight, anyhow. It was then that Roly made his break and ran out of the cave.

We have only his word for that part. Some of the Bar B-Q boys claim it's impossible—that Roly never told a joke that funny.

All I know about it is this. He really could stem a rope!

THE END



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